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different herds of cattle; and it is not only those from the same group of herd-boys that set up a new village together, but all the sons of the age-village. Thus when a boy leaves the herd group he joins a larger community, including the friends of his own age who have herded cows with him, and many others as well. Every boys' village consists primarily of the sons of the member of an older village who originally gave the land for its building, but sons of other villages live there too.

The village begins with perhaps a dozen boys, and their younger brothers join them, one by one; but after some years, when the senior members of the boys' village are between sixteen and eighteen years old, the younger ones begin to be refused admittance to the village: 'they are children.' The young ones then either begin a new age-village of their own, or else join a village which has already been started by the sons of a nearby men's village a little junior to that of their own fathers. If you inquire who are the members of such and such a boys' village you are always told that they are the sons of a particular village of men, but detailed investigation reveals the presence of some sons of other men's villages as well. Brothers, half-brothers and other relatives are sometimes members of the same village, but more often not; and if they do belong to the same village that is because they are near each other in age, and were born in the same village, not because they are kinsmen.

The members of the older boys' village, which is now closed and no longer increases in numbers, begin to marry as they reach the age of about twenty-five. Getting married is often a gradual process; but it is not until he has his wife permanently with him that a young man can have fields of his own and eat the produce at his own place. The cultivation of land requires the co-operation of a man and woman, and cooking on any elaborate scale is a woman's business. As the young men marry their village expands. The site is not changed but the houses are built ever bigger and farther apart, and adjacent land is brought under cultivation. The boys' village with which we are best acquainted is in this transitional stage. It has fifty-three members altogether, the majority of whom are single; but some few are married, cultivate their own fields with their wives and eat food cooked by their wives in their own houses. Of those who are single some again are betrothed to girls who visit them from time to time, but each

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582 241 621 still cultivates his father's fields and eats at his father's home. In former days, we were told, the marriage age of men was even later than it is at present (*vide infra*, p. 80). 'Perhaps after twenty a boy would be betrothed, but to a young girl, and he would wait eight years before she grew up.'

857 From the time boys begin to herd they recognize one of their number as a leader. 'When we herd cows as boys', a friend told us, 'there is always one who is obeyed by his fellows whatever he says. No one chooses him, he gains his leadership and his prestige by bodily strength. For always, when we are boys together among the cows, we vie with one another and dispute about going to turn back straying cattle, or about fetching fire to cook the food we have brought with us. And so we start fighting, and we go on fighting until one of us beats all his fellows completely and so becomes the leader. And then it is he who sends others to turn back straying cattle, to fetch fire and to collect firewood. And he is greatly respected. He settles quarrels too. What we quarrel about most as boys is a particular insult: one says to another: "You are only a child, you are, I am your senior." This is always happening and then it is the part of the one who is leader to set those two on to fight. We all stand round and watch and the one who first cries is proved the child.'

622 Later, when the boys have built apart from their fathers, one of their number is often appointed by the headman of their fathers' village to settle disputes between them. Some boys' villages have no such appointed leader, but many of them do. Such appointments are, however, temporary. It is only when political authority is transferred to their generation that the young men's permanent leaders are chosen.

b. The 'coming out' ceremony

561 622 621 643 Eight or ten years after the young men of the senior boys' village of the chiefdom have begun to marry, their fathers hand over the government of the country to them. This transfer of authority is effected in an elaborate ceremony called the 'coming out' (*ubusoka*).

The 'coming out' is a series of legal acts by which the country of an old chief and his village headman (*amafumu*) is, with certain reservations, handed over into the possession and control of his

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a ruler.' It is relevant to add that cuttings of this tree strike easily in the soil and climate of Nyakyusa country. When a chief dies he is buried beside his trees, and gradually a thicket—a sacred grove—forms round them.

The young men spend much time feasting and dancing. Formerly not only did they raid cattle for food from neighbouring chiefdoms, but they also took cattle, milk, and bananas from their fathers' villages. And they still do the latter, for they say: 'We are now the owners of the country.' The milk and bananas are often sent by the old chief, but 'if the chief is stingy, they teach him a lesson by going and *taking* bananas, saying: "We are important people."' Great emphasis is laid on this right of the young men to take food: one group, the mates of the first heir of a senior chief, boasted to us: 'We came out with grandeur, we ate many men's cattle.'

After a month or two the members of each new village move off to build on a site of their own, and the wives of those who are married join them. Wives do not come to the first temporary shelters. The senior of the new villages remains on the site of the temporary shelters where fire was made, the ritual trees planted, and the hearth-stones of the senior headman established with magic. Gradually each member builds himself a permanent hut.

The old men move aside to make room for their sons. If land is short they may move on to the site on which a boys' village formerly was, or there may be other land available. Whatever the position, adequate land must be provided for the young men's villages. And, we were told, 'We old men are glad to move, we are glad our sons are so many and we leave the land to them.' Or again: 'The old men move because new fire has come; the young men have made themselves into new people, hence they cannot build on their old sites but on new ones. Perhaps the old men will succeed them, for they may build in the boys' village where their sons were, or if there is space they go elsewhere. But the old men rejoice greatly, for their sons have "come out".' Nevertheless there are sometimes disputes between villages of different generations regarding a particular site (*vide* Document, p. 188).

A few months after the 'coming out' each of the two young chiefs marries two wives. A young chief may be married already; but the two whom he now takes rank as his great wives (*abehe*

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abakulumba) and their eldest sons are his two heirs in the chieftainship. Young girls, daughters of neighbouring chiefs, are carried off with a show of force from their fathers' homes, by the young chief's men, who themselves later contribute to the herd of cows sent to regularize the position. The two great wives are thus married not solely with the cows of their husband, but also with those of the men whose sons their sons will one day rule. The duty of arranging the match lies with the village headmen of the old chief, and it is said that they are often guided in their choice by dreams.

The girls who are carried off are just about to reach puberty, and they stay at the house of one of the men of the old chief until their periods begin. When both have reached puberty they are initiated, not at their fathers' houses, as are ordinary girls, but in the country of their husband, and both together. At their initiation the old men and women of the country (contemporaries of the old retiring chief) play the part normally played by a girl's parents and their neighbours, while the young chief and his men take the usual part of a husband and his friends. And then, after the ceremonies are over, the two girls are given to the young chief as his wives. Houses are built for them separately, i.e. in the senior age-village of the new chiefdom for the first wife, in the next senior village for the second wife; and in this separation of dwelling place is already apparent the future division of the chiefdom between their sons.

Within the chiefdom, and among the wives and children of the chief two 'sides' (*imibafu*) are recognized. Usually, in each country there are, at its beginning, at least two age-villages and half the wives of the chief on either side. This distinction of two sides is important in succession, a son from each side eventually inheriting half the country.

From the time of the 'coming out' of the two young chiefs till the day of their own father's death there exists between him and them a delicate balance of prestige and power. Each of the three, traditionally, has judicial authority in his own age-villages, but appeals in difficult cases may be taken from either of the young chiefs and their village headmen to the old chief and his village headmen, while the religious duties of chieftainship are exercised entirely by the old chief. But in the old days it was the young chief who fought and fed men. 'Young chiefs used to lead their

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was a fierce man in war, and always quarrelling with and spearing his fellows, he would say with pride: "He is my son!" And if he heard people saying: "The son of so and so is a fierce man", he would rejoice. And if the son wished to marry young his father would refuse him cows, saying: "Swagger first." ' That truculence (*ubukali*) is a form of swaggering for men, is still evident in the funeral dance, when men charge up and down with spears, displaying their strength, and take umbrage at the slightest thing (*vide infra*, p. 151). And marriage was deliberately delayed partly because a bachelor was thought to be a fiercer warrior than a married man.

This admiration of truculence, as shown in the funeral dance, reveals a contradiction in Nyakyusa values. On the one hand urbanity and good temper are praised—they are intrinsic to *ukwangala*—on the other truculence. Is the opposition one between old and new values, or is the contradiction itself traditional? It is obvious that a readiness to fight was a quality valuable to the village in the days of inter-village warfare, and the Nyakyusa tell of murderers and even thieves being reprieved just because they were so useful in war. 'We did not drive away violent men (*abagasi*) in the old days; we said: "They will fight along with us in the future" '; whereas since the pacification of the country, quarrelsome men have become nothing but a liability, likely to get their fellows and their chief into trouble with the Administration. The Christian emphasis, also, is all on the virtue of peaceableness. There has probably been some change in values with the disappearance of war from the villages, but we think that a certain contradiction always existed: swaggering young men were admired, and children were warned not to be quarrelsome (*nkali*) towards their fellows, lest they be accused of practising witchcraft, or rouse the anger of a witch. The contradiction is not, of course, peculiar to Nyakyusa society, and it may be resolved by defining the groups within which fighting is excluded, and those in which it is approved. Most Nyakyusa would hold that in the old days quarrelsomeness within the village was bad, that towards members of another village of the same chiefdom it was allowable, and towards members of another chiefdom it was good. In the wider society of to-day the same distinctions are apparent: the war dance at funerals is limited lest it lead to fighting between villages (*vide infra*, p. 151) but admir-

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her chair and sat on the floor. We said to Mwaipopo as he entered: 'There is a daughter-in-law here.' He said: 'That's all right, she is enjoying the company of Kagile (M.W.)', but he was obviously restive, and went outside as soon as food appeared. He said to G.W.: 'That's quite all right, let them go on enjoying each other's company. She (i.e. S—) does not avoid me because M— (a local missionary) brought her to me one day and I killed a bull for them, but let us stay outside now, for they would be ashamed to eat.' The women protested very much saying *they* would go out, but the chief would not agree. As soon as they had drunk their tea they hurried off, and crouching down with their backs towards the men they answered their farewell greetings.

In reply to queries as to why they insist that father-in-law and daughter-in-law avoid one another, the Nyakyusa relate a myth of incest between them: 'Long ago a chief's son married a very beautiful wife. The boy's father saw the girl and after one look desired her, for she was very beautiful, and he said: "She is fit to be a chief's wife (*umwehe*)." Men said this was a very bad thing and agreed that in future they would not look at their daughters-in-law. That is how avoidance began. It was for fear of fathers making love to their sons' wives.' This myth is related with some diffidence, and not everyone knows it, but it was told us, or referred to, repeatedly, and may be taken as current in the society. One informant, a very intelligent woman doctor, also associated seeing a father-in-law with seeing his sexual activities. 'We think that to see your husband's father is very rude, because it is as if you saw him sleeping with your husband's mother. You compare, you see, your husband's body and you see your husband's father's body. It is very bad.'

Age-villages are then associated with the feeling that fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law must be kept completely separate lest they should commit incest, and that adolescent youths should not have any glimpse of the sexual activities of their parents; but the separation of the generations is not complete, for marriage with the daughter of a village neighbour is approved, provided he is not an *immediate* neighbour. Mwakionde explained that in the old days people disliked marriage with the daughter of a next-door neighbour because she was 'like a daughter'—'the fathers ate *embalaga* (a dish made with bananas) together'—but marriage with the daughters of other village-mates was always approved.

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582 Marriage with the daughter of a father's age-mate is also favoured, though she is called 'a village-sister' (*ulilumbu pa kipanga*), and such a marriage means that a girl has to avoid a father-in-law in her own father's village.

837 835 Adultery with the wife of a village neighbour is regarded as a heinous offence, much worse than ordinary adultery, and so also is the seduction of the wife of one's father, or of one of his village neighbours, even though a father's wives are eventually inherited by his son. 'It is bad,' Mwaisumo said, 'because they are friends of one's own mother.' That is to say, there is a direct extension of the incest taboo so long as the father is alive. A son who has committed adultery with his own father's wives is afraid to attend his father's funeral lest he fall dead.[1] [764]

584 Since marriage between 'brothers and sisters of the village' is approved, courtship goes on between the youths of a boys' village and the girls of their fathers' village, with this limitation, that brothers and sisters, or cousins—the descendants of a common grandfather or great-grandfather—must not be present at a flirtation. Boys from the same age-village go about together, and they commonly flirt with any group of girls they meet, whether from their fathers' village or not. It is then that the incest taboos are learnt. If one of the boys is known to be related to one of the girls his companions send him away saying: 'Don't you see your sister is here? You cannot come.'

Formerly, we were told, girls of the same village lived together (until they were married) in a girls' house (*isaka*), where they were visited secretly by lovers, who had external relations with them. Such girls' houses no longer exist among the Nyakyusa, each daughter living in her father's homestead until she is married, and sleeping with her own mother, or with a step-mother when her father visits her mother, or with the other children in a separate division of the long house, if her mother is the only wife. Only when she is keeping an older companion company at the initiation ritual does she sleep with the other girls of the village in a hut provided by the 'bride's' father.[2] But permanent girls' houses still exist in Ngonde. There each family

[1] Occasionally an elderly man gives his son leave to sleep with his wives in secret, while he (the father) is still alive; then an elaborate ritual is performed on the father's death.

[2] This hut is referred to as *isaka* also, but only during the initiation; it is to be distinguished from a hut regularly reserved for girls.

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usually has a separate hut for its girls, to which, we were told, their lovers come secretly by night.

Nyakyusa informants connected the existence of girls' houses with the marriage age. In Ngonde the marriage age of girls is much higher than it is among the Nyakyusa, partly because there are many more Christians (45 per cent as against 16 per cent) who do not allow polygyny, partly because even the girls from pagan families in Ngonde dislike marrying a polygynist, and partly because a much higher percentage of young men are away at work, than from Nyakyusa country. Formerly, they said, the marriage age was higher among the Nyakyusa also, and then the Nyakyusa had *isaka*. It is certain that among the Nyakyusa betrothal of a girl has long taken place before puberty, for the husband plays an essential part in the puberty ritual, and there were always some girls who were betrothed when quite tiny; but the evidence is fairly clear that the average age of betrothal among the pagans has been going down. The Nyakyusa view is that no man in his senses, who is able to marry, will engage a little girl of eight if he can find one approaching puberty; and it is the scarcity of wives that makes men 'marry' little girls. It is also clear that the number of cattle in the country, and their rate of circulation, has increased during the last two decades, so there are 'too many cattle chasing too few brides' with the result that the marriage age of girls has fallen, and the number of cattle given at marriage has increased.

Once she is betrothed, a girl's 'husband' has exclusive sexual rights over her, and she cannot entertain lovers in the *isaka*. The only two occasions on which she may flirt and have external relations with a man other than her husband, are during an initiation ceremony, when the girls of the village who have not yet reached puberty sleep with their fellow who is being initiated, and there entertain young men, and when she accompanies a bride to her husband's house. A bridegroom is expected to have external relations with his wife's two friends, as well as with his wife, on the night they bring her to his house. Love-making at the initiation-marriage ritual is held to be 'part of the ritual' and a means of sex education, and a husband can make no complaint about his 'wife' receiving lovers then, provided that penetration does not take place.

Homosexual practices are said to be very common in the boys'

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754 cows. No, they did not take his food and mats, was he not a village headman? He moved; but, after one year only, they went to fetch him back.'

Here, in the accusation against a village headman, who, by virtue of his office has the power of defence and of bringing 'the breath' on wrong-doers, we come to the root of the ambivalence towards those accused of witchcraft. Witches are dangerous, but the very power which makes them dangerous also makes them valuable as 'defenders', for no distinction between the power of attack and defence is consistently maintained. The essential difference lies in the use of the power. Hence, Mwaisumo declared, people actually like it when a man who has admitted witchcraft builds among them. 'They say he has the power of defence, and they think that a man who has once admitted witchcraft will not throttle them.' A parallel attitude towards homicides and cattle-thieves existed in the traditional culture, when chiefs were sometimes urged to rescue a homicide from the vengeance of a dead man's kin, or a cattle-thief from enraged victims, on the grounds that one who had proved himself such a fierce warrior (by killing another) or so skilful in lifting cattle, was too useful in war to be lost to the chiefdom.

754 683 Nevertheless, if a person who has once been accused of witchcraft makes himself (or herself) unpopular again, the old case is raked up against him or her; and there are men who have been driven from one chiefdom to another, each time accused by their neighbours, and wives who have been divorced for witchcraft by one husband after another. This is the terrible fate held up before 'proud' children.

754 571 582 And what of the slur on the family when a member is convicted of witchcraft? We have seen that witchcraft is considered hereditary in all but a few exceptional cases, and the stock reaction to an accusation is: 'We are astounded! No one in *our* family has ever been convicted of witchcraft!' In practice, parents are loath to allow a son or daughter to marry into a family in which either parent has a reputation of witchcraft; two or three cases were cited in which parents had opposed a marriage for this reason (*vide* Document, p. 252). But such arguments are private within the family, and the family feared by one group of neighbours need not be considered dangerous by people from another village. Since practically every adult marries at least once, the

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objection to marrying the child of one who has been convicted is clearly not pushed to its logical conclusion. No slur is cast on any one lineage when an individual is convicted of witchcraft, for he may have inherited it from either parent, or even got it from a friend; conversely no lineage is cleared by an autopsy, for not all the children of a witch are necessarily witches. Thus a man may have a father or brother or son who is 'pure', yet be a witch himself. As we have seen, even persons belonging to the same lineage may occasionally accuse each other. Nevertheless, when an individual who is reputed to be a witch dies, the close relatives do sometimes insist on an autopsy, in order to clear the deceased of suspicion, and possibly themselves also (*vide supra*, p. 117). In one case we recorded it was a daughter who insisted on the autopsy being performed on her mother, a reputed witch. No witchcraft was found.

So far we have dealt with cases of misfortune befalling an individual, followed by action against a fellow villager who is suspected of being responsible. This type of case is far the commonest within the field of witchcraft. When a general misfortune, such as a plague or epidemic, threatens, the chiefdom acts as a whole, not the villages separately, and the ritual is directed primarily to securing the blessing of the shades. There is some suggestion of ridding the chiefdom of witchcraft at the same time, but the emphasis is on appeasing the ancestors. The traditional new year cleansing (*ukutag' ikikungu*), now rarely performed, was also the concern of chiefdoms not separate villages, and it involved prayer to the ancestors.

b. The age-village and the ancestors

We have dwelt at length on witchcraft and 'the breath of men', for, in Nyakyusa belief, the defence of the village against witches and the punishment of wrong-doers by 'the breath' of their fellows is the main corporate activity of the village in the religious sphere. There are no village rituals directed to the ancestors comparable to those performed on behalf of lineages and chiefdoms. Indeed, belief in the power of shades operates only in situations where social position is determined by descent, as it is in lineages and in the succession to chieftainship. The office of village headman is not hereditary. The son of a village headman

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621 that adolescent sons are not permitted to visit their homes after
834 dark, and when they come by day for their meals they are
often required to eat in the open court-yard and not 'hide in
606 the bananas or huts' lest they make love to their fathers' wives.
They do not sit about in the men's village. Thus, although the
villages of fathers and sons adjoin until the sons 'come out', the
young men are physically separated from their young 'mothers'.

The feeling that sons should not be cognizant of the sex activities of parents, and that father-in-law and daughter-in-law should avoid one another is not, of course, peculiar to the Nyakyusa; all we seek to show is that the extreme elaboration of these avoidances among the Nyakyusa is dependent upon the existence of age-villages. Whereas a Pondo daughter-in-law must never [171] walk across the courtyard of the kinship village in which she lives, or approach the cattle byre or the men's side of her mother-in-law's hut, lest she come too near her father-in-law, yet, living in the same village, she necessarily sees him daily; the Nyakyusa daughter-in-law, living in a separate village, need not (and should not) set eyes on her father-in-law after her marriage. Where the territorial segregation of fathers and sons is blurred (as at Rungwe) there father- daughter-in-law avoidance is less strictly observed. The Nyakyusa regard this extreme form of avoidance as a peculiarity of their culture which has been imparted by them to the small groups (such as Ndali, Penja, and Nyika) whom they are assimilating.

Father- and daughter-in-law incest is clearly a potential danger in a society in which cattle are controlled by middle-aged and elderly men, who frequently have to choose between taking another wife themselves and giving cattle for a son's marriage, and who are accustomed to marrying young girls of an age suitable to be wives to their sons. But we cannot show that the danger is *greater* among the Nyakyusa than it is among other patrilineal cattle people such as the Pondo, Zulu, or Swazi, who do not find it necessary to segregate fathers- and daughters-in-law in different villages.

On the other hand the danger (common to all polygynous societies) of sons seducing their fathers' wives is exaggerated among the Nyakyusa by the absence of circumcision, the late 545 marriage age of men, the very early betrothal and marriage of 582 girls, the high degree of polygyny, and the practice of sons

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inheriting their stepmothers. Where circumcision is practised a grown woman scorns sex relations with an uncircumcised boy, therefore uncircumcised youths are not potential lovers of their fathers' junior wives; but with the Nyakyusa there is no ceremony to mark the sexual maturity of a male, and adolescent youths are acceptable to young married women of their own age. And not only does the wide difference in the age of men and girls at first marriage allow of a high degree of polygyny, but the very early bethrothal of girls (over whom their future husbands have exclusive sexual rights except during the initiation ritual) means that there are very few girls available to the unmarried men. The institution of girls' huts (*isaka*) has disappeared among the Nyakyusa owing to the lack of nubile girls who are not already betrothed, and the period of seclusion at initiation (when betrothed girls are available to men other than their husbands) is short. The contrast with Nguni society, in which girls do not marry until sixteen to twenty-two, and have several years of great sex freedom before marriage[1] is marked. We suggest that it is because unmarried girls are so scarce and lusty bachelors so many, that the seduction of the wives of polygynists is frequent, and homosexual practices are general.[2] Nyakyusa insist that formerly seduction was rare,[3] and possibly the impulse towards it was indeed less strong when girls married rather later and *isaka* existed (*vide supra*, p. 87).

Lastly, the Nyakyusa permit the inheritance of a father's widows by his sons, a practice regarded as improper by certain other peoples (e.g. the Pondo[4]) who practise the levirate. A son is required to treat all his father's wives as 'mothers' while his father and father's full brothers are alive, and intercourse with a father's wife is treated as a heinous offence necessitating special purification; but after the death of the father and his full brothers these same women become wives of their former 'sons'—with the limitation that a man cannot inherit his own mother or her kins-

[1] Hunter, op. cit., pp. 180–6; M. Kohler, *Marriage Customs in Southern Natal*, pp. 20–44; H. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, pp. 135–6.

[2] H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa*, p. 408 (footnote), hints that similar practices exist among the Nyasaland Tonga and elsewhere *before* adolescence only. The Nyakyusa certainly continue after puberty.

[3] MacKenzie, op. cit., p. 63, states that the acknowledged child of an adulterous union was openly put to death.

[4] Hunter, op. cit., p. 211.

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28. FEAR OF HEREDITARY WITCHCRAFT

Mwaisumo (*clerk*).

754
582 'There are some people who, though they wish to marry a certain woman, fear to do so because the mother or father of the girl is a witch. They are afraid to marry because she is the child of a witch. And sometimes a girl loves a particular young man very much, but if his father is repeatedly accused of witchcraft her parents refuse to allow the marriage, because the young man's father is a witch. Such was the case of a certain young man, in the country of Mwaijande, who loved a particular girl very much. Her father was said to be a witch (*undosi*) a maker of wild animals;[1] he was said especially to make leopards. The parents of the young man objected very much to his marrying this girl whose father was a witch, the mother of the young man objected even more than her husband, saying: "No! She is a witch; witches always go in the lineage (*ikikolo*), and she will also be a witch when she grows up and comes to the house" (i.e. her husband's house). The father of the young man and the father of the girl were next-door neighbours, their homesteads adjoined. The matter was only spoken of in whispers, but I heard about it because the brother-in-law of the young man (the husband of his full sister) was my friend, and he told me about it.

'And again, a certain man who was always said to be a witch made love to a woman who was a widow, the husband who had married her having died. They agreed together that they should marry. When the parents of the woman heard they objected very much, saying: "That man is a witch." The women was not yet old—she was quite young. Her husband had died but there was no one to inherit her. So then she refused the man (who had made love to her) saying: "I do not love you." Her parents argued against the marriage, saying: "We do not like it" and they persuaded her to leave the man, saying: "You know yourself that when he beats you you will think, 'I am married to a witch'." For she was grown up and her parents could not compel her if she loved him, though if she had been a child they would have been able to object and compel her to do what they wished. But she (though she was grown up) followed the advice of her parents and left him and refused to marry him.

[1] There was some doubt whether this man should be classed as a witch or a sorcerer. In this text Mwaisumo refers to him as *undosi*, but elsewhere he was spoken of as a sorcerer (*vide supra*, pp. 124, 252).

[p. 252]

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'And again, a long time ago, my brother Mwamoto went to betroth a girl at the place of that man who was a witch. Mwanama objected very much to his younger brother's action, saying: "You should not marry at that man's place, everyone says he is a witch." But Mwamoto paid no attention to any of them—others also tried to persuade him not to marry the child of a witch. He married her and she is with him now, as his wife.

'People fear witchcraft in a husband or wife lest he or she bring witchcraft into the house, and they have children who become witches when they grow up. As I explained witchcraft runs in a lineage (*ikikolo*). It is especially women who object to their children marrying or being married by a witch, it is they (the women) who forbid the children, and their husbands also object. I remember once that a certain man came to make love to my sister. The mother of this man was spoken of as a witch, and my mother objected very much, saying: "Do not desire this young man's cattle, I do not like him even though you do. His mother's witchcraft is much spoken about." He had come to betroth the girl when she was still very young. The others agreed to what my mother said and refused the young man, saying: "We have not got a child yet (ready for marriage), she of whom you speak must first grow up." '

In reply to questions Mwaisumo explained that people fear to marry witches lest their children be witches and be driven from country to country. 'We say it is bad to be driven out. A man is never driven out because of the witchcraft of his wife—he used to divorce her if it were proved—but a girl's parents will refuse to give their daughter in marriage to a young man from a family of witches because if he is convicted of witchcraft she will be driven out with him.'

We were also told of a young Christian who had been refused by a number of women. It was whispered that this was because his father was a sorcerer. Later on, however, he married and the talk died down.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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third to cook food, and a final gift is required to make her lie down on the mat along with her girl friend, who stays with her for a few days. This ceremony of the gifts is never omitted in heathen marriages, and each successively binds the girl to her husband. 584 585

If the bride is a twin, the doctor must be present, to sprinkle medicines over house and bedding, and to give the couple a decoction supposed to prevent the occurrence of twins in the new family. 789

Except the daughters of Christian parents, all Konde girls are married before they arrive at puberty, and what has been described above applies to child wives, who stay with their husbands for about a month, and then go home. 582 177

The child wife having grown to womanhood, however, further ceremonies have to be observed. The husband arrives at her father's house with an ox for the feast, and a mock struggle for possession of the bride takes place. The women of her family barricade themselves in the house, which is attacked by the women of the other family. Payment of a shilling opens the door, and the further struggle which takes place in the house is brought to an end by the formal presentation of the ox. The husband and his friends enter, and engage in a weird dance, a mere tramping of the floor in unison, with shouting and waving of spears, no doubt a survival of what was once marriage by capture. 583

The washing and shaving of the bride follows, and her bark-cloth is burned, and a new one given her, and then comes the feast of beef and beer, the materials 585

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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585 for the latter having been previously collected from house to house, with a snatch of song at each door. After the feast the bride goes in procession to her husband's house, accompanied by a number of girl friends. The happy couple are chased along the road, beaten with sticks as they go, and advised to treat each other as becomes husband and wife. At the door of her future home a final ceremony has to be performed: the wife of the go-between pours water over the husband's hands, and the bride, kneeling at his feet, receives the water as it falls, and washes her own hands therewith.

582 There are strict rules regarding selection. A man may not take a wife from the family either of his father or of his mother, using the word "family" in the native sense, implying the whole circle of relatives from which each originally came. But there are countless bye-laws. A man has two wives from different families; the son of one wife may take a wife from the family of the other, the two families not being related; but a man may not marry the daughter of his paternal uncle, for the latter is his "father," and the girl is his "sister." The daughter of his maternal uncle, again, is his cousin, and he may not marry her, though there is nothing to hinder his father marrying her. The chief Koloso married his father's sister, to the great scandal of his people, although the "father" was really a very distant relative, according to European ideas.

684 The marriage tie is sacred and binding; how binding on the wife may be judged from the laying up of

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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fearsome mixture: ground flesh of *inyifwira* (the flying serpent); heart and nose of hyena, which enables one to see danger ahead; heart of hawk, giving power to see danger from behind; and heart of the fish-eagle, which swoops down upon its prey. Thus furnished the young rulers can foresee the future, deal with the present, and be a terror to all evil-doers. This powerful medicine is drunk by all chiefs at their installation, and spread under the beds to make them see in dreams what is coming in the future. But never may the chief eat food that is not freshly cooked, for that would take away all virtue even from these potent drugs.

From that time until the 19th November, the young men led a happy, care-free life. Their food was daily provided; cattle were set apart for them; they did not shave all that time, and no girls were allowed to go near them. On the closing day of the ceremonial, the fathers of all the young rulers came and stood at a distance, and the younger brother of Reuben was given a spear with which he knocked on the closed door of the hut in which Reuben and his companions were waiting, and called out, "There is war outside; come out." Immediately all rushed to where the elders were standing, and after greetings, the company formed itself into a boundary commission, to fix the limits of Reuben's authority. Finally, the same day, the new chief was married to the two girls whose offspring will be his successors. They must be daughters of men of note, not cowards in battle, of no reproach in the tribe; and the girls

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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643 themselves must be free from any kind of blemish.
●582 They drink a medicine weaker than that taken by their husband, but sufficiently potent to make them respected by all the other women of the district.

622 The death of a chief, like that of Chungu, is a great event. An immense crowd of men and women
766 gather on these occasions. At the death of Mwafongo, near Karonga, in 1913, fifty head of cattle were killed for the feast. Of these perhaps thirty were the property of the dead chief; the rest were brought by the mourners as a token of respect for the dead man; but for each animal so killed, an equivalent, an ox for an ox, a cow for a cow, was given to the donor from the dead man's herd, so that the herd left by Mwafongo was reduced by fifty at his death. Intense emotion is generated at these gatherings, frequently leading to death. And in the past it was the rule that a chief should not go to his fathers alone. If therefore fighting broke out, and men were killed, it was only right and fitting that this should be so. In 1897 there was a small rising against the Germans, in which the chief Mwakalinga and many of his people were killed. The chief having been killed, it was not surprising that there should be a heavy death-roll among his men. The death of Mwasulama in 1918 was followed, quite naturally, by the influenza which carried off so many of his people.

622 About a month after the death of the chief, the feasting is resumed, this time with immense quantities of beer which has been prepared in the interval. The new chief is now anointed with oil, and the

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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601 *Mwisukulu* = grandparent or grandchild; but a man addresses his male grandparents as *Mwinangu* (my compeer) and his female grandparents as *Nkasi* (wife). A woman addresses her male grandparents as *Ndume* (husband) and her female grandparents as *Mwinangu* (my compeer).

Ndume = husband, extended for a woman to include the husbands of 'sisters', male grandparents, male grandchildren, husbands of female grandparents or grandchildren; all 'brothers' of a husband, husband of a father's sister, and grandfathers of a husband, and finally, the husband's sister's son.

Nkasi = wife; for a man it includes the wives of 'brothers', female grandparents and grandchildren, or wives of male ones; all sisters of wife, daughters of wife's brothers, wives of grandsons by marriage, the 'grandmothers' of a wife, and the wife of a maternal uncle.[1]

605 The Ngonde do not seem to distinguish cross-cousins from ortho-cousins as clearly as do the Maravi, or the Yao, Makua, and Makonde peoples.

MARRIAGE

582 There are no exogamous clans, but the descendants of a common grandfather (either paternal or maternal) are forbidden to marry.[2] The descendants of a common great-grandfather are supposed not to marry, but sometimes they do so before the relationship is discovered; they then simply drink a special medicine, but do not break the marriage. The old men speak of a now abandoned custom of preferential cross-cousin marriage.[3] The husband of the eldest girl of a family has the prior right to marry her full sisters, and such marriages are very common. A man also has the right to marry the daughter of his wife's brother, therefore the wife of the wife's brother is classed as a parent-in-law in kinship terminology.[4]

583 The passage of cattle makes children of a marriage legitimate. A child of a man who has given no cattle belongs either to the mother's husband or to her father. Cattle are in rapid circulation. Few men possess more than six cows at any time, yet marriage payments range from four to thirty cows (formerly only one or two were given). Marriage involves considerable expenditure and months of preliminary economic activity.[5] The cattle are seldom handed over all at once, but in ones or twos over a period of years. Full brothers have a claim to the cattle of their sister's marriage, and at the marriage of his eldest daughter the father hands one of the cows to the village headman.[6]

584 A girl commonly goes to visit and sleep with her betrothed husband for several years before she finally sets up house for him. The ideal procedure is by negotiation with the girl's father, but a man without cows may run off with a girl and satisfy her father with cows later on, or a man with cattle may seduce a married woman and pay her husband the adultery fine of two cows, plus the cows originally given for her marriage. A girl may be betrothed before puberty, and may visit her husband, but she is supposed to be virgin at her initiation ceremony, and is generally not allowed to

[1] Sanderson, 3, 1923. [2] Mackenzie, 1925, p. 55.

[3] See Wilson, 2, 1936, p. 267; but according to Sanderson, 3, 1923, p. 453, cross-cousins are classed as sisters, and all first cousins are unmarriageable; according to Johnston, 1897, p. 415, and to Mackenzie 1925, p. 55, cousin marriage was not allowed.

[4] Wilson, 2, 1936, p. 262; Sanderson, op. cit., p. 451.

[5] Wilson and Hunter, 1939, p. 11. [6] Mackenzie, 1925, p. 65.

7: Sanderson 4-5 (ca. 1920) 1923 FN17 Ngonde FN17

MWIKO is very nearly a translation of the word *tabu*, and may be used either of things or of forbidden degrees of relationship. 601

3. The following points are noteworthy :—

(1) The wife of a "brother," whether older or younger, uterine or not, is called by the same term (*nkasi*) as a wife. I am informed that sexual intercourse, though not countenanced, is not uncommon, and such cases are apt to be treated leniently should they come to (native) court. This might be regarded as evidence of former "group marriages," but it should be noted that a man's first heir is his brother, who succeeds to the wives in common with the rest of the "property." 601 602 837

The same term (*ndume*) is used by a woman for the "brothers" of her husband as for the husband himself, and their wives are *wakasi-winake* (= "her fellow-wives"). 601

(2) The "sisters" of a wife are also called *nkasi*. The husband of the eldest of a family has a prior right to marry her uterine sisters, and a semi-right to her other "sisters"; such marriages are very common. Any man who marries a woman to whom another has a prior right becomes *mweghanisi* (or *kitwasi*) to the ousted one. (See Definitions.) Reciprocally a woman calls her "sister's" husband *ndume*, even after her marriage to another. 601 595

(3) A man has the right to marry the daughter of his wife's "brother" as among the Thonga,[1] and the wife of the wife's "brother" is called *nkogho* (see Definitions); the son of the wife's "brother" is often called *ndamu* instead of *mwana*. There is a special term for a father's sister, which is reciprocally used by a woman for her "brother's" daughter; the term *nkasi-mwinangu* (= "my fellow-wife") does not appear to be used by her unless and until her husband actually marries the girl. This special term is *nasenge*, and it can hardly be mere coincidence that it so closely resembles the Nandi term *senget* for father's sister[2] (*na-* being a common Bantu prefix, usually honorific, and, on the other hand, the terminal *-t* merely formative). 582 601

A woman calls the son of her husband's "sister" *ndume*. (See para. (6) below.)

(4) All "grand-daughters," except those by marriage, are called *nkasi*, but marriage has never been allowed within living memory; the husband of these "grand-daughters" are called *mweghanisi* (*kitwasi*). A "grandson" is not called *ndamu* but (*mwisukulu*) *mwinangu* (= "my compeer");

[1] B. Z. Seligman, "The relationship systems of the Nandi, Masai and Thonga, *Man*, April, 1917, 46 (quoting Junod).

[2] Seligman, *loc. cit.*, quoting Hollis, "The Nandi."

7: Sanderson 4-5 (ca. 1920) 1923 FN17 Ngonde FN17

582 601

his wife is called *nkasi*, like the wife of a "brother," not *nkogho*. This appears to be the result of the law that a man may have to marry his "grandmothers." (See para. 5.)

601

Similarly a woman calls her "grandson" *ndume*, and his wife *nkasi-mwinangu*.

No distinction is made between the offspring of a "son" and that of a "daughter," either by a man or a woman.

"Grand-daughters" by marriage are not called *nkasi* by a man, nor are "grandsons" by marriage called *ndume* by a woman: the term *mwisukulu-mwinangu* is used in either case. It is of interest to note, however, that the wives and husbands of these relations are called *nkasi* and *ndume* respectively, which is evidently a relic of the period when the whole tribe was divided into two classes, marriageable and unmarriageable: since a "grandchild" by marriage belonged to the latter class, his or her spouse must be included in the former.

[616]

(5) All "grandmothers" are termed *nkasi*, except perhaps the sisters of the paternal grandfather; some say that these should be classed as "sister," as the sister of one's *mwinangu* (grandfather), because *nkasi* would not be polite to the *nasenge* of one's father. Others deny this and include all grandmothers as *nkasi*, and it is doubtful whether the objection is not modern. The same applies to the "grandmothers" of a wife.

587

A man often has to marry his "grandmothers" on the death of his "grandfather," though if the latter were a chief or a rich man the heir would probably marry them as part of the property. The rule appears to be that it is the duty of any man to marry his "grandmothers" if they are destitute.

[582] 601

A woman calls all her "grandfathers" *ndume*, though actual marriage is not permitted. It is difficult to say whether this is due to analogy with the relationship of a man to his "grandmother," or is the corollary of that to his "grand-daughter." Since marriage with a "grand-daughter" is not uncommon in other tribes, it may be that it was originally the reason for a woman calling her grandfather *ndume* among the Wangonde, but that the persistence of the terminology after such a marriage came to be regarded as incestuous is partly due to analogy.

As a result of the similarity of relationship between grandparents and grandchildren the same term *mwisukulu* is used for both. There was formerly a special term for grandparents (*mbuya*), but it is now obsolete.

601 604

(6) The relationship between mother's "brother" and "sister's" son is peculiar, in that the term is used reciprocally (*mwipwa*). A man calls the wife of his

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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583
837 her and then returns to her first husband the cows he had given for her with two in addition as adultery fine. But this return is usually made only after the first husband has brought a lawsuit against him.

837 Adultery is extremely common now-a-days; when a man runs off
684 with, or is discovered seducing, a married woman and has not enough
177 cows to marry her, he is legally compelled to pay two cows for the adultery to her husband. In pre-European days an adulterer, if caught, was usually punished by the husband and his neighbours with death or extreme torture, and the old men tell me that adultery was then a rarer event.

584 The extent to which a girl is usually allowed to choose whom she
177 will marry is difficult to guage, and varies in different circumstances. Opportunities of meeting and flirting with young men at dances and ceremonies are frequent; and the older men say that, owing to the abolition by the Europeans of the old severe punishments for adultery, girls
● [582] are freer now than they used to be, for their lovers no longer fear to run off with them if they are married or bespoken (which is in Nyakyusa law very much the same thing). The custom of betrothing infant girls is, they declare, less common than it used to be; they are now more chary of pledging their daughters "for when they grow up they just run off with someone else." A girl's choice is, however, limited by the necessity of finding a lover who has cows, and few young men have enough to secure her if she is already married, though they may have enough to pay an adultery fine.

[428] Owing, in part, to the laws of inheritance, by which a commoner's[5]
593 full-brother inherits before his son, it is the older men who control the cattle. Every bachelor is largely or wholly dependent on his own father (or his dead father's heir) for the cows for his first marriage, and he must hoe his father's fields for many years before he is given enough to secure a wife and to set up a family of his own. Economic reciprocity is an element in most human relationships, and it enters into the Nyakyusa relationship of father and son. It is well understood, in this society, that
593 after a certain length of time spent hoeing his father's fields a young man
685 is entitled to some cows, if his father has any; and if his father delays too long the young man either stops hoeing for his father or else he takes legal action and enforces his claim. Between father and son such law cases are rare, but they are frequent between a young man and the brother of his father who has inherited his father's wives, property, and position in the family.

[5] The laws of inheritance for a chief are, in certain respects, different; vide infra, "The Chiefdom." [Cat. 116, pp. 278ff. --Analyst]

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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583 Normally a bachelor is given cows one by one, over a period of years, and, as we have seen, he sends them, as he receives them, to the father of the girl he wants to marry. One cow is sufficient for betrothal, but not until he has given three can he begin openly to sleep with her. And he cannot usually set up his own economy until he has given at least three cows and she has reached puberty and been initiated. He may of course bespeak an already grown girl, but if he engages himself to a young one he is expected to bring two or more bulls as well, during the course of her initiation.

684 If he chooses to spend his cows in adultery fines, he may, but he will then have to wait longer to get married.

●582 561 Thus the system of marriage by a transfer of cattle is, in this society, directly linked with a late marriage age for young men and with a privileged position for older men. When a boy gets cattle he at once gives them to an older man in order to secure his daughter as a wife; the labour of every bachelor helps to increase his father's wealth in food; it is in general the older men alone who can afford more than one wife. And there is an average difference of ten years or more in the initial marriage age of men and girls. [162] The tax registers show in part of the district, among 3,000 adult[6] men, 34% bachelors, 37% monogamists, and 29% polygynists; and investigation proves that, generally speaking, it is the young men who are bachelors, the men over forty-five who are polygynists.

511 574 Though cattle are their most valued form of wealth, it is on agriculture that the economy of the Nyakyusa is primarily based. Meat and milk are luxuries, and daily bread comes from the fields. Hard work in a fertile country provides food for each family, and the millet beer which is the ordinary material of hospitality. Hospitality brings a man prestige and authority among his fellows; on the possession of sufficient food largely depends the contentment of his wives. And in the production, preparation and eating of food the relationships of the family and of the individual family within it, are clearly visible.

241 512 Hoeing is the work of men, planting, weeding, reaping and cooking is the work of women. The men, young and old, hoe for about [illegible] hours on most mornings of the year; in the lower altitudes they begin well before sunrise and finish about 9 a.m., on the upland plateau they begin later and continue till noon or beyond. The energetic ones sometimes hoe again for an hour or two in the late afternoon. Different

[6]Presumed to be 18 years or over.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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ever made to the spirits, but when some member of a family or his wife or child falls sick the anger of the spirits is often suspected as a possible cause. There are usually other reasons suspected as well, and so the sickness is taken to a diviner for diagnosis. Various causes are suggested to the diviner and he selects one among them. If the anger of the spirits is selected then this senior kinsman must pray for the one who is sick, if he is to recover. When half-brothers live at a distance from one another, after their father and his brothers have died, then each may pray to the spirits to cure a little sickness in his own family but if the sickness persists then a message must be sent to the senior kinsman. And, as the anger of the spirits is due to wrong doing, the sinner must reform his ways as well.

The wrongs which rouse the spirits to anger are usually breaches of family morality. If a son does not respect his father or insults him, if an heir neglects to feed and provide for the dead man's children, then when sickness falls on him or his own children it will probably be traced to the anger of the spirits at his behaviour.

Space does not allow any full analysis of religion in family life and in the relationships of kinsmen and affines. Not only the ancestor cult but witchcraft and magic are factors in them. A man's neglect of a wife or his cruelty to her may, it is believed, lead to his falling sick through her witchcraft and that of sympathetic neighbours; his relations with his father-in-law are affected by the fear that if he offends him, his father-in-law may, by magical means, kill his children, and so on.

Wider kinship groupings than the family gather at ceremonies and are recognized in the rules against incest. But there are no clans; there is no descent group continuous down the generations with a common name and definite membership. Each individual family has its own penumbra of kinsfolk, the effective kindred of a man and his son, or of two half-brothers are not all the same, while each single person is especially related by respect, affection and mutual obligations to particular kinsmen beyond his own family. Descent, as we have seen, is patrilineal except in the case of illigitimate children. A man asked for his *ekekolo* always recites first the names of his paternal forbears as far as he can remember. But if he is related through mother or grandmother to a chief he usually volunteers this fact as part of his *ekekolo*; and questions always elicit some knowledge of his mother's paternal kinsfolk and a statement that "they are my *ekekolo* too." Descendants of a common grandfather (either paternal or maternal) are to-day forbidden to marry, and no case of infringment has come to my notice; descendants of a common great-grandfather are supposed not to marry but, I am told,

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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582 they sometimes do so before the relationship is discovered, and then simply drink a protective medicine but do not break the marriage. The old men speak of a now abandoned custom of preferential cross-cousin marriage.

604 The bond between a man and his mother's brother (*omwipwa*) is mainly constituted by the passage of cattle. "My real mother's brother," they say "is the one who took the bulk of the marriage-cattle which my father gave for my mother", and it is between this particular brother and a woman's eldest son that the bond is strongest. Because this brother of his mother has taken "our cattle" and married with them the young man has a certain right of making free with his property during his life, the right to receive from him one cow to set up a herd of his own with, and a residuary right of inheritance if this uncle dies childless and leaves no brothers. If his mother's brother does die without other heirs, it is only the particular wife obtained with and the particular progeny of his father's marriage-cattle that the young man can claim.

602 764 Ceremonies, and particularly funerals, are the occasions on which the effective relatives of any one family meet all together, both kinsmen and affines. I have even heard kinship defined by attendance at funerals: One man argued that he was not related to another because, though they were admittedly genealogically related they did not attend the funerals in each other's families and were not therefore really kinsmen at all.

602 572 Known blood-kinship is a common occasion of friendship, but it does not necessarily produce it, while the absence of friendship can render many of the normal kinship bonds quite inoperative. We have seen already that quarrels may destroy the relationship between half-brothers and lead to a judicial separation. On the other hand, I have observed two men meet for the first time, discover a common great-grandfather and at once become friends. A few months later the sister of one of them died and the other went to the funeral and behaved there like a close kinsman.

Proximity is another factor of great importance in the relations of kinsfolk, for while nearness of dwelling does not always make for friendship, yet a considerable distance tends to lessen it and to make attendance at funerals impossible.

606 One of the most stringent taboos in Nyakyusa life is that which separates father and daughter-in-law. A woman may never speak to, approach, or look at her husband's father. If she does it is believed that she will die, through the witchcraft of indignant neighbours, a painful and lingering death. And the taboo is extended from her own father-in-

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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boys tell all sorts of stories, especially about women, they discuss love-making and women, and tell tales of their own conquests. The younger ones listen to these things and that is all right in the boys' village, that is how we learn. But we compare in our minds and think that if a boy stays at home it is as if he listened to all this from his parents, and people always do talk lewdly at night; and that is very bad, that is foolishness.—But in the boys' village it is good for the young ones to listen, that is how children grow up."

On another occasion when I told this same man that in Europe many people thought it a good thing for boys to get sexual instruction from their parents and teachers he was shocked: "But I think it is impossible" he protested "for parents to go into detail with their children; there is too much shame on both sides. And if they did, it would damage the children's respect for them."

There is thus a correlation in this society between the age-village system at its genesis and the belief that a boy's dawning interest in sex must be informed, not by his parents, but by friends only a little older than himself.

Few men marry before twenty-five years of age, but affairs with girls begin before puberty. All affairs are related in detail to friends in the age-village, and the younger ones learn by listening; and they also learn when the older boys send them as messengers to the girls of their fancy.

Besides the more serious love affairs which are carried on in secret, groups of boys from the same age-village commonly flirt with any girls they meet on the way, and it is then that the incest taboos are learnt. If one of the boys is known to be related to one of the girls, either through a common grandfather or great-grandfather, his companions send him away: "Don't you see your sister is here? You cannot come!"

Contrary to a general belief about "primitive" societies, homosexual intercourse is common in the boys' villages, between close friends, but there is no real perversion; homosexuality is said to be always *faute de mieux*. The older men in discussion dismiss it with the tolerant word "adolescence," it is never continued after marriage, and all except the feeble-minded get married sooner or later.

But life in a boys' village also gives its members much information and wisdom unconnected with sex. There, as we have seen, boys perfect their skill in building, and there also they learn to argue and express themselves with adult fluency. It is characteristic of the Nyakyusa legal

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
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177 [586] some copy, the manners of Europeans towards their wives, but neither husband nor wife is quite sure what the change in manners implies, and both are often inconsistent in their behaviour. As an educated Nyakyusa put it: 'They do not know what to expect from each other.'

[585] [162] Marriage relationships are complicated by the disproportion in the numbers of men and women; a disproportion which continues while the rule of monogamy is preached and accepted by many. The first effect of the increase in wealth in Rungwe [582] district was for the marriage age of women to go down; in Mr. Punch's phrase 'too many cattle were chasing too few wives'; but the combined pressure of missions and Administration, and some acquaintance with the customs of the outside world, has reversed that tendency, and the marriage of girls below puberty, which was general among pagans in 1938, now appears to be exceptional. Many girls are still betrothed before puberty, but [584] they do not go to their husbands until after that time, and to be still single at puberty with no betrothed to play his part in the ritual is no longer embarrassing to a girl, for the puberty ritual is not celebrated in full. The ruling of the District Council that a man may not recover more than *one* cow given for a girl who has not reached puberty, if the marriage is dissolved, discourages men from giving cattle for girls who have not grown up. At the [582] same time the marriage age of men is going down. Marriage in the early twenties or even the late teens is common now, for young men who have been to work on the mines can buy marriage cattle for themselves, and Christians who are well-to-do provide for the marriages of young sons instead of taking additional wives. Therefore the gap in the marriage age of men and women is very considerably diminished, but it still exists, and combined with the disproportion in the total number of males and females it means that a considerable proportion of the women (perhaps 30 per cent)[1] must become the junior wives of polygynists or remain unmarried altogether, or live alone as widows.

595 Among pagans polygyny is approved, but young men are irked by their responsibility for elderly widows, a responsibility that was formerly accepted as a matter of course. Able-bodied wives are still economically an asset even now that trade goods are in general use. For Nyakyusa men—pagans—have insisted that as

[1] The masculinity rate is calculated at 87·9 : 100 (*vide supra*) and the *average* difference in the marriage age may well be six years.

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

I went to the place and got permission to enter the hut in which the first part of the ceremony took place. I found there the parents of the girl, the girl sitting enveloped in clothes in one corner of the hut, and some older females, one of whom was the acting *unnyago*. Some male guests were also present[20]. As the girl had had her first catamenia the present ceremony marked at the same time the end of her preparation for marriage.

The *unnyago* prepared a beverage of beer in which a light-brown medical powder *(imbondanya)* was put. First the girl had to drink from it, then the parents followed. This beverage was believed to strengthen *(ubusisya)* the consumers. Then a spear was handed to the girl by her father, and the girl handed it in turn to some relatives of the bridegroom waiting near the hut. These persons had to bring the spear to the girl's bridegroom as a sign that he could now marry the girl[21], but not before he had brought a bull to the girl's father. After this the girl, now sitting in the middle of the hut, was given small gifts from the participants in the ceremony.

Practical instruction of premature girls in house-hold matters.

Following this the whole body of the girl was anointed before the door of the hut. The *unnyago* began by anointing her legs; then the girl herself continued it. The ointment was prepared from castor oil and a powder of red wood *(Kipimba,* found commonly in the environment of Lake Rukwa). At this moment a male participant in the ceremony chanced to, come out of the hut, and suddenly a young woman

[20] Cf. Wilson, Introduction, p. 258; The Study of African Society, p. 11 (The Rhodes-Livingstone Paper No. 2, 1939).

[21] *ukwega:* to take (also as regards marrying); *ubwegia:* nuptials.